

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action of December 18, 2001, claims 10-15 were allowed and claims 6 and 21 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 1, 7-8 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Martellotti 4,971,575; claims 2-5 and 19-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Martellotti in view of Perino et al 6,234,820; claims 9 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Martellotti in view of Kamono 4,973,264; and claims 17, 18, 22 and 23 were rejected "for the same reason of claims 2, 3, 7, 8 respectively". Those rejections are respectfully, but vehemently traversed.

Each of independent claims 1, 10 and 16 herein call for second conductors to be in position to engage first conductors of a flexible circuit *at an edge* of a male body member. Specifically, claims 1 and 10 call for an adapter to include a second receptacle for receiving the second conductors to engage the first conductors of the flexible circuit *at the edge* of the male body member. Claim 16 calls for the female connecting device to have means for positioning the second conductors in engagement with the first conductors of the flexible circuit *at the edge* of the male body member. The Examiner has rejected claims 1 and 16 under §102(b) as being anticipated by Martellotti apparently due to his mistaken interpretation that Martellotti discloses a male connector and an adapter (or female connecting device) wherein second conductors of the adapter (or female connecting device) are positioned for engaging first conductors on the male connector *at an edge thereof*. Applicants agree that Martellotti discloses:

a connector assembly for removably interconnecting first conductors of a flat flexible circuit to a plurality of second conductors without the use of conductive terminals, comprising:
a male connector including a relatively rigid male body member having an edge about which the flexible circuit is wrapped with the first conductors of the circuit facing away from the body member at the edge thereof; and
an adapter/female connecting device/connector for receiving the second conductors in position for engaging the first conductors of the flexible circuit.

However, Martellotti does *not* disclose the positioning of the second conductors to receive the first conductors *at an edge* of the male body, as explained in more detail below.

Applicants have clearly identified and defined “edge” as required by the claims in the Specification and Drawings. Specifically, in the Specification, first at page 6, line 6, it is stated that

First flexible circuit is *wrapped about an edge 22* of a first, relatively rigid male body member 24.

Then, at line 9, the Specification continues:

Edge 22 is elongated, and a yieldable backing structure in the form of a longitudinal resilient strip 26 is adhered to the body member *along the edge*.

Further in the Specification, on page 7, beginning at line 3, it is stated that

The circuit is wrapped around resilient strip 26 which is effective to bias first conductors 14 toward 2nd conductors 18...

From the above language, taken in conjunction with Figures 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 identifying edge 22 and resilient strip 26, it is clear what the edge is, where the edge is, and what it is (and is not) used for. Accordingly, the Examiner’s interpretation of Martellotti, that “the second conductors are positioned to engage the first conductors *at the edge of the male body*” (Office Action, page 3) is clearly inconsistent with Applicants’ definition of “edge” and the requisite element of the claims. Furthermore, the Examiner’s response to Applicants’ argument (Office Action, page 5, paragraph 9) by including a dictionary definition of “edge” and attempting to fit his interpretation of “edge” into this definition is similarly faulty. The definition of “edge” provided by the Examiner

the narrow part adjacent to a border

appears to be completely and intentionally ignored in his following statement (referring to Martellotti) that

the second conductor engages the first conductor of the flexible circuit *adjacent the edge* of the male body member

The claims do *not* call for engagement of the conductors *adjacent* the edge of the body member - but rather *at* the edge. The Examiner is not only rejecting the claims on a reference that does not disclose the requisite elements of the claim, but he is also attempting to manipulate his own arguments to reject the claims. It appears that the Examiner is either not taking the time to read

the Specification and Claims (or his own arguments) or that he does not understand the law pertaining to proper §102 and §103 rejections. In either case, the Examiner's rejection is unfounded, inasmuch as Martellotti does *not* disclose the second conductors in position for engaging the first conductors of the flexible circuit *at the edge* of the male body member, and is respectfully, yet vehemently traversed.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application, and allowance of claims 1-5, 7-9, 16-20 and 22-24, along with previously allowed or allowable claims 6, 10-15 and 21, are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Version of Amended Specification Showing the Changes Made

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Figure 2 shows first flat flexible circuit 16 wrapped around edge [26] 22 of first male body member 24, with first conductors 14 of the circuit facing away from the first body member at the edge. The circuit is wrapped around resilient strip 26 which is effective to bias first conductors 14 toward second conductors 18 of second flexible circuit 20. Flexible circuit 16 is held and located in wrapped condition about male body member 24 by a positioning means in the form of an adhesive applied to opposite faces of the body member in areas appropriate for adherence to the flexible circuit. It is contemplated by the invention that the adhesive could be applied alternatively to the flexible circuit, the result being that the adhesive joins the body member and the flex circuit. By using the adhesive, the overall envelope of the body member can be maintained to be very thin.